WE'RE PINNED DOWN, CAP! WHAT DO WE DO?
LYONS
ROUEN
LAVAL
JUST HANG TIGHT, BUCKY...
...HERE COMES THE CAVALRY.
MOVE! LET'S GO!

RATATATATAT
WAK
CAP...

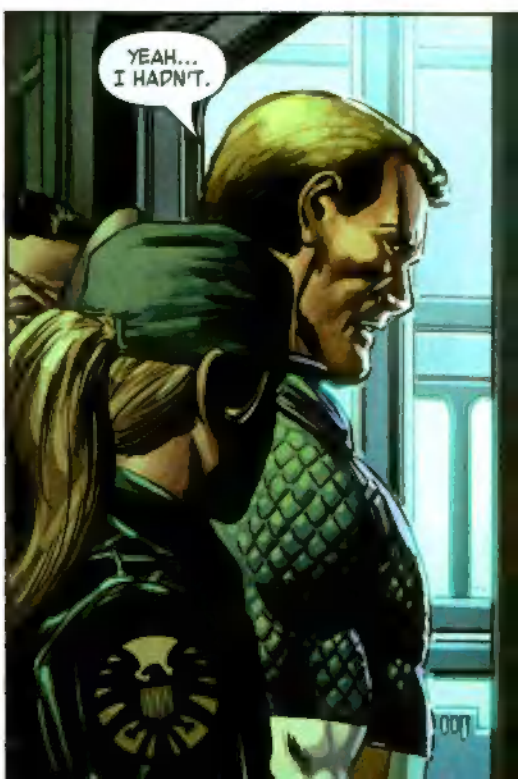
...GOT A LITTLE... TROUBLE HERE...
BUCKY!
OH, GOD. HANG ON...I'LL HAVE YOU TO A MEDIC IN NO TIME. JUST HANG ON.
...HEH... REALLY HAD THEM ON THE... RUN, DIDN'T WE, STEVE...? SORRY TO--
NO.
NO! DAMN IT! NOO--

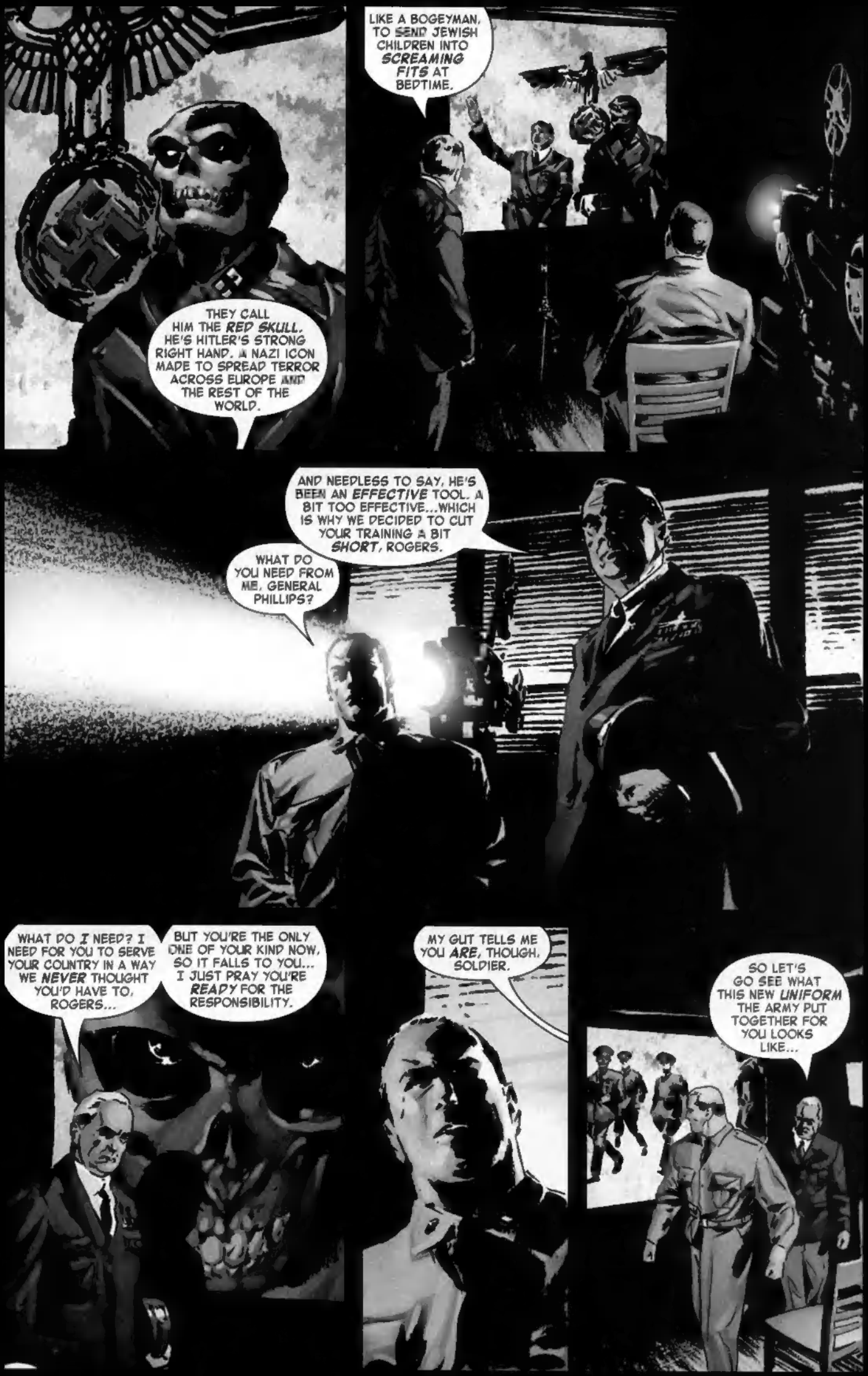
S.H.I.E.L.D. Helicarrier—
Headquarters of the U.N.
Peacekeeping Taskforce
High Above the
City of Manhattan
SO, I'M ASSUMING AGENT 13 FILLED YOU IN ON THE BASICS?

YES, BUT I'LL BELIEVE IT WHEN I SEE IT, AND PROBABLY NOT EVEN THEN, HONESTLY.
I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN, BUT IT'S REAL, ROGERS. THE SKULL GOT KILLED TONIGHT.
ONLY THING STOPPING ME FROM REPORTING THAT TO THE U.N. IMMEDIATELY IS THE FORENSICS...WHICH IS ONE OF THE REASONS I NEEDED YOU HERE.

MY DNA?
YEAH. POLICY IS TO DESTROY YOUR BLOOD SAMPLES AFTER YOUR CHECKUPS, TO PREVENT JUST THIS PROBLEM...SO I'VE GOTTA GO TO THE SOURCE.

OH, GOD...I'D ALMOST FORGOTTEN THAT MONSTER WAS LIVING INSIDE A CLONE OF YOU, STEVE.


YEAH... I HADN'T.


THEY CALL HIM THE RED SKULL. HE'S HITLER'S STRONG RIGHT HAND. A NAZI ICON MADE TO SPREAD TERROR ACROSS EUROPE AND THE REST OF THE WORLD.
LIKE A BOGEYMAN, TO SEND JEWISH CHILDREN INTO SCREAMING FITS AT BEDTIME.
AND NEEDLESS TO SAY, HE'S BEEN AN EFFECTIVE TOOL. A BIT TOO EFFECTIVE...WHICH IS WHY WE DECIDED TO CUT YOUR TRAINING A BIT SHORT, ROGERS.
WHAT DO YOU NEED FROM ME, GENERAL PHILLIPS?
WHAT DO I NEED? I NEED FOR YOU TO SERVE YOUR COUNTRY IN A WAY WE NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D HAVE TO, ROGERS...
BUT YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE OF YOUR KIND NOW, SO IT FALLS TO YOU... I JUST PRAY YOU'RE READY FOR THE RESPONSIBILITY.
MY GUT TELLS ME YOU ARE, THOUGH, SOLDIER.
SO LET'S GO SEE WHAT THIS NEW UNIFORM THE ARMY PUT TOGETHER FOR YOU LOOKS LIKE...

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

I've never done a letters page before, and for this one I was going to fill the page with memories of buying Cap as a kid. But instead, I got lucky enough to get an amazing letter from one of my favorite super hero writers, Kurt Busiek, just in time for this issue. And Kurt is also responsible for the title of our new letters page. I wanted to go with *Patriot Tracts*. Heh...

Yours, Ed Brubaker

Dear Ed and Steve:

Knowing this is being written for an all-pro letters page, my instinct is to go for the sound bite, like some manically-positive movie reviewer—"Was there ever a more perfect union than Brubaker and Epting on CAP!" or like that. Instead, let me talk a little about Jack Kirby.

Back in the dawn of time, when dinosaurs ruled the Earth and I bought my comics at the local drugstore as often as not, Jack Kirby came back to Marvel and took over CAPTAIN AMERICA, after a long and much-lauded run written by Steve Englehart. I was aghast. I'd been loving the Englehart run, and Kirby went off in such a wild and stylistically different direction that it was like I was suddenly reading about a completely different character, a guy who had the same name and costume as the Cap I'd been reading about, but little else. In time, I came to realize that I liked Kirby's approach to the book, too, and if I was picking the best of CAPTAIN AMERICA, I'd include both what Steve and what Jack did. But for my 14-year-old self, it was an adjustment, and it took a while to get over the change.

Today, I look back on long runs of comics, and realize that for all the continuity and history that tells us these characters all take place in the same settings, any time you bring new creators onto a series, you're essentially starting something new. It may be a little different from what came before, it may be a lot—but it's going to be different. It's going to be its own thing. And what we value isn't the consistency of it all, but the vision. The runs that stand out are those where a creator (or a team) had such a strong vision that they took the character someplace distinctive and exciting, someplace fresh—and the stuff we dismiss is the stuff that doesn't have that kind of vision, when a series just sort of meanders about in between those good and memorable runs. Peter David's HULK. The Claremont X-MEN. Simonson's THOR. And yes, Englehart's CAP, Kirby's CAP, the Stern/Byrne CAP, the DeMatteis/Zeck CAP, the Gruenwald CAP, the Waid/Garney CAP. Each of them may be a chunk of an ongoing series, but they're also each a new series of their own, creating a new identity, exploring different visions, different directions, different themes.

And now, the Brubaker/Epting CAPTAIN AMERICA. Easier to set apart, with a new #1 and all, but it's the same thing, really. What's going to make this run work or not is not how well it fits into what's gone before, but how well it establishes its own identity, how well it says, "This is **our** Captain America, here's how we see him in a way others haven't." In one issue, we're off to a hell of a good start.

Acknowledging what's come before—particularly the shake-ups of "Avengers Disassembled"—but not continuing in the same vein, this first issue lays out some very solid foundations for a new approach. A troubled, tougher Captain America. A familiar world, with criminals we can recognize—terrorist cells, illegal arms dealers—only these guys are a step beyond what we know, selling weaponry that taps into the Negative Zone. Believable threats in a slightly-more-fantastic world.

And then there's the Red Skull and his fragmented, patched-together Cosmic Cube. The Skull isn't the ranting, over-the-top megalomaniac of yore, but rather a cold and chilling criminal mastermind—and the Cube isn't a miraculous device that somehow never quite gets used to its potential, but a broken thing the Skull is trying to fix. This is not the big, glossy super-hero world we're familiar with—every scene, every line, every shadowed moment tells us that this is a dirtier, more "realistic," more visceral world, one more in tune with pulp adventure and techno-thrillers than the godlike space aliens and brightly-colored bank robbers we're so familiar with. A world that has more in common with Tom Clancy than Tom Swift—where fantastic super-weapons exist, yes, but they're rare and special enough that even a shattered something, that now holds not power, but just a promise of power is valuable and sought-after even in such a damaged state.

Ah, but we know where it's going, don't we? For all Cap's new living arrangements and rougher justice, we've got the familiar—the tart-tongued Agent 13, burying what might be romance under a tough exterior. The Skull's nefarious plans. And the Cube—like so often before, we know where this goes. He's going to fix the Cube and rule the world and Cap's going to have to take him down before democracy and freedom are wiped out forever, right? Well, no.

Because, it turns out, we're staying in that pulpy, techno-thriller world, where costumed heroes like the Red Guardian are no match for very human corruption and ambition. Where the Skull's usual plans go awry, and the guy you thought was just a background element to the Skull's march to glory turns out to be the real threat.

This is a new start, a new vision. Told with confidence by Ed, who knows his way around shadows and pulp, and brought to life beautifully by Steve, who can make a guy in red, white and blue scale-mail and leather look real without looking silly, and who draws the creepiest-looking Red Skull in decades. Without throwing away anything that's gone before, you've marked out your own territory, teased us with the traditional, and embarked on your own journey. I don't know where it's going—I just know I'm in the hands of two consummate storytellers, you know damn well where you're going, and I'm in for a hell of a ride. As surely as I was with Kirby, with Englehart, with Waid and Garney, and so on. It'll be different from any of those, because it's a different vision behind it. But it'll be good. That much, I can tell from just 28 pages.

And so we start the next great run of CAPTAIN AMERICA. Long may you wave, guys.

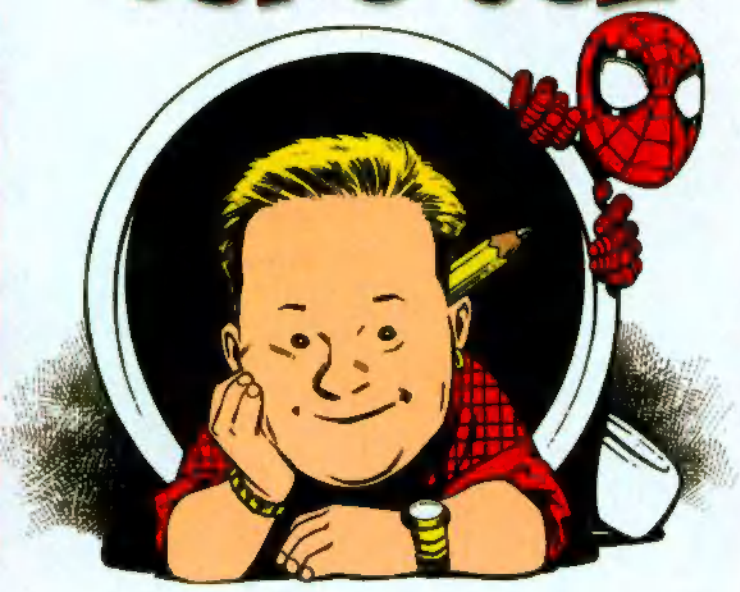
Kurt Busiek

NICOLE WILEY & MOLLY LAZER
ASST. EDITORS
ANDY SCHMIDT
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
TOM BREVOORT
EDITOR
JOE QUESADA
CHIEF

FREEDOM OF SPEECH C/O MARVEL COMICS
10 EAST 40TH ST., NEW YORK, NY 10016
IF YOU DON'T WANT YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS PRINTED, PLEASE LET US KNOW. LETTERS MAY BE EDITED FOR CONTENT AND LENGTH.

E-MAIL: MHEROES@MARVEL.COM
MARK E-MAIL "OKAY TO PRINT"

CUP O' JOE



HEY, GANG, I'm back!

Welcome to my new "Cup O' Joe" soapbox! As always this column will be dedicated to helping guide you, our marvelous Marvel True Believer, to the coolest comic consumables currently crashing comic shops near you!!!

This month begins a little initiative we're calling "Marvel Next." What's "Marvel Next" you ask? Well, in this and subsequent months we'll be focusing on some next generation Marvel characters who we feel will in short time become major new staples within the Marvel Universe. This month we're focusing on the extremely popular X-23...

Ripped from the pages of the unbelievably popular NYX series and out of the world of Uncanny X-Men leaps X-23 into her first solo book. This mini series written by Craig Kyle and Christopher Yost and illustrated by Billy Tan will set the record straight about this young lady who is quickly becoming the "it" character in the world of X-Men. This book is going to be *pistol hot!*

Speaking of heat, I have to mention a few white hot creators this month, who will be affecting some familiar faces. We've got famed Brit scribe Peter Milligan taking over X-Men, the Hulk-Man himself, Peter David taking over, well... The Hulk, and Greg Pak and Greg Land on Phoenix Endsong! Phew, that's a lot of incredible talent, how do you guys deal with it all, I'm exhausted.

See ya in
the funnybooks,
JQ
EEK!

KILLZONE™

www.KILLZONE.playstation.com

- 11 chaotic trench, urban and guerilla warfare environments.
- 27 devastating weapons.
- Advanced AI opponents that react to your every move.
- Competitive or collaborative multiplayer and online modes for up to 16 players.

MATURE 17+ M — Blood, Violence, Strong Language

ONLINE. BROADBAND ONLY

LIVE IN YOUR WORLD.
PLAY IN OURS.™

Killzone is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment Europe. [redacted] Sony Computer Entertainment Europe. Developed by [redacted]. All rights reserved. "Live in Your World. Play in Ours." is a registered trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Online icon is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. Online play requires Internet connection, Network Adaptor (for PlayStation 2) and Memory Card (8MB) (for PlayStation 2) (each sold separately).